



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TENNESSEE CELEBRATES NATIONAL TRAILS DAY JUNE 7 TENNESSEE WILL MARK EVENT WITH VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES AND HIKES

Nashville, Tenn. - Tennesseans are encouraged to participate in a range of activities at State Natural Areas and Tennessee State Parks in celebration of National Trails Day on Saturday, June 7, 2008.

The Tennessee celebration coincides with the American Hiking Society's 16th annual National Trails Day, which is the largest single-day trails and outdoor celebration in the country. Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to get outside and participate in events at local, state and national parks, forests and other public lands from coast to coast. Activities include hiking, biking, horseback riding, paddling, trail dedications, work projects and more.

In Tennessee, the Department of Environment and Conservation's Division of State Natural Areas is offering activities in east, middle and west Tennessee natural areas, including exotic species education and control activities, trail repair and trailblazing. Select Tennessee State Parks will also offer volunteer activities and interpretive hikes.

"The majority of hiking trails at Tennessee State Parks and Natural areas are built and maintained with the help of volunteer labor," said Environment and Conservation Commissioner Jim Fyke. "National Trails Day gives us an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the hard work, dedication and countless volunteer hours that go into creating and to maintaining the trails we enjoy."

Program descriptions and contact information for National Trails Day events in Tennessee involving the Department of Environment and Conservation include:

East Tennessee

House Mountain State Natural Area - Lisa Huff will lead exotic species education and control activities at House Mountain State Natural Area in Knox County. This program will begin at 9 a.m., and work will end around 2 p.m. Participants will hike up the Mountain Trail and will continue to the West Overlook, stopping along the way to identify and to remove exotic species. Reservations are required. Please contact Lisa Huff at (865) 594-5601 or lisa.huff@state.tn.us by June 5.

Middle Tennessee

Cordell Hull Birthplace State Park - Cordell Hull Birthplace State Park in Pickett County will lead trail maintenance activities on June 21, 2008 from 9 a.m. until noon on the Bunkum Cave Loop Trail to celebrate National Trails Day and the one-year anniversary of the trail's completion. After the volunteer work period, park rangers will lead an interpretive hike around the Bunkum Cave Loop Trail. No pre-registration is required.

Short Springs State Natural Area - Forrest Evans will lead trail maintenance activities at Short Springs State Natural Area in Coffee County near Tullahoma. Work will begin at 10 a.m. and will continue until 2 p.m. Participants will hike along Adams Falls Trail, repairing and widening trail tread, fixing switchbacks, nailing boundary markers and setting trail blazes. Reservations are required. Please contact Forrest Evans at (615) 532-0431 or forrest.evans@state.tn.us by June 5.

(MORE)

West Tennessee

Fort Pillow State Historic Park - Rangers at Fort Pillow State Historic Park in Lauderdale County will lead a five-mile hike, interpreting the 1864 battle and construction of the Civil War fort. No pre-registration is required. Call Park Manager Robby Tidwell at (731) 738-5581 for more information about this event.

Lucius Burch, Jr. State Natural Area - Allan Trently will lead trail maintenance activities at Lucius Burch, Jr. State Natural Area in Shelby County. Work will begin at 8 a.m. and will continue until noon. Participants will hike along Blue Trail, rerouting the path in two wet areas, removing privet, placing signs and building steps and boardwalks. Reservations are required. Please contact Allan Trently at (731) 512-1369 or allan.trently@state.tn.us by June 5.

All events are scheduled for June 7 unless otherwise noted. All times are local. Participants should bring water and food, and they should wear long pants, appropriate shoes and gloves. All tools will be provided.

Tennessee has 79 designated State Natural Areas throughout the state, covering approximately 110,000 acres of ecologically significant lands. More information about Tennessee's natural areas program, including a complete list of all natural areas and scheduled field trips, can be found at <http://tn.gov/environment/na/>.

Since 1993, the American Hiking Society has set aside the first Saturday in June as National Trails Day, bringing together outdoor enthusiasts to participate in educational exhibits, trail dedications, gear demonstrations, instructional workshops and trail projects. It also provides an opportunity to recognize the many volunteers, land managing agencies and outdoor-minded businesses for their support in developing and maintaining trails.

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